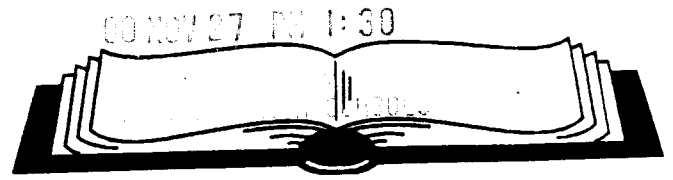


NEW JERSEY

2000-2001
Guidelines and
Application**BEST
PRACTICES****Deadline for Application to County Office:
NOVEMBER 27, 2000**

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Category	Gifted and Talented	(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	Inter-district Problem Solving Convocations	
Number of Schools with Practice	5	(If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)
	districts	

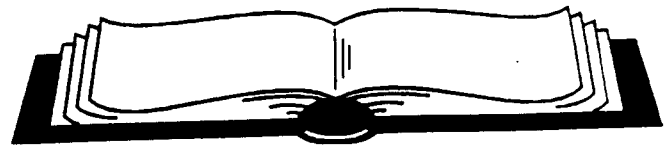
County	Union County		
District (Proper Name)	Cranford Public Schools		
Address	Street/P. O. Box 132 Thomas Street		
	City	Cranford, New Jersey	Zip Code 07016
Telephone	908-709-6207 or 8872	Fax 908-709-1708	Email sternwa1@cranfordschools.org
Chief School Administrator	Dr. Emalene Renna		
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)			
Address	Street/P. O. Box		
	City		Zip Code
Telephone	908-709-6221	Fax 908-272-1841	Email ucgta@hotmail.com
Principal / GT Coordinator	Angelo Paternoster		
Program Developer(s)	Fern Loebel/Donna Vaupel		
Application Prepared By	Union County Gifted and Talented Association		
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	<i>Emalene Renna</i>		

FOR COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY

Approved: ☒ Yes ☐ No County Superintendent's Signature *[Signature]*

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEW JERSEY

2000-2001
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Category	<u>GIFTED & TALENTED</u>	(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	<u>INTER-DISTRICT PROBLEM SOLVING CONVOCATIONS</u>	
Number of Schools with Practice	<u>5</u>	(If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)
	<u>DISTRICTS</u>	

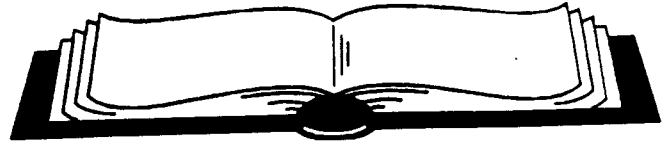
County	<u>UNION</u>		
District (Proper Name)	<u>MOUNTAINSIDE PUBLIC SCHOOLS</u>		
Address	Street/P. O. Box <u>1497 WOODACRES DRIVE</u>	City	<u>MOUNTAINSIDE</u>
		Zip Code	<u>07092</u>
Telephone	Fax <u>908-232-7338</u> Email _____		
Chief School Administrator	<u>DR. GERARD SCHALLER (CSA)</u>		
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)	<u>N/A</u>		
Address	<u>N/A</u>		
	Street/P. O. Box <u>N/A</u>	City	<u>N/A</u>
		Zip Code	_____
Telephone	Fax _____ Email _____		
Principal	<u>DR. GERARD SCHALLER</u>		
Program Developer(s)	<u>ELAINE FASS</u>		
Application Prepared By	<u>UNION COUNTY GIFTED AND TALENTED ASSOCIATION</u>		
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	<u>Gerard A. Schaller</u>		

FOR COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐ No County Superintendent's Signature _____

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEW JERSEY

2000-2001
Guidelines and
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Category	<u>Gifted & Talented</u>	(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	<u>Inter-District Problem Solving Convocations</u>	
Number of Schools with Practice	<u>5</u>	(If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)

County	<u>Union</u>		
District (Proper Name)	<u>Roseville Public Schools</u>		
Address	<u>720 Locust Street</u>		
	Street/P. O. Box		<u>07203</u>
	<u>Roseville, NJ</u>		Zip Code
	City		
Telephone	<u>908-298-2041</u>	Fax	
Chief School Administrator	<u>Darlene M. Roberto</u>		
Nominated School #1			
(Proper Name)			
Address			
	Street/P. O. Box		
	City		Zip Code
Telephone		Fax	Email
Principal	<u>n/a</u>		
Program Developer(s)	<u>Maryellen Moffitt</u>		
Application Prepared By	<u>Union County Gifted & Talented Assoc.</u>		
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	<u>Darlene M. Roberto</u>		

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐ No County Superintendent's Signature _____

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEW JERSEY

2000-2001
Guidelines and
Application



BEST PRACTICES

~~Application for Registration to County Office~~
~~November 27, 2000~~

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Category	<u>Gifted & Talented</u>	(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	<u>Inter-district Problem Solving Conventions</u>	
Number of Subjects with Practice	<u>5</u>	(If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)
	<u>districts</u>	

County	<u>Union</u>
District (Proper Name)	<u>Springfield Township</u>
Address	<u>P.O. Box 210</u>
	<u>Springfield, NJ 07081</u>
	<u>City</u>
Telephone	<u>973-376-1025</u>
	<u>Fax 973-912-9229</u>
	<u>Email gray@springfieldschools.com</u>

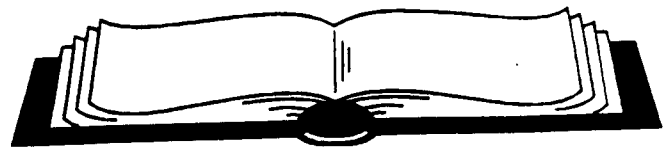
Chief School Administrator	<u>Gary Friedland</u>
Nominated School #1	
(Proper Name)	
Address	
	<u>Street/P.O. Box</u>
	<u>City</u>
Telephone	
	<u>Fax</u>
	<u>Email</u>

Principal	<u>G/T Coordinator</u>
Program Developer(s)	<u>Dr. Pamela Gray and Barbara Trueger</u>
Application Prepared By	<u>Union County Gifted & Talented Association</u>
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	<u>Dr. Gary Friedland (signature above)</u>

FOR COUNTY OFFICE USE ONLY	
Approved	<u>Yes</u> <u>No</u> County Superintendent's Signature _____

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEW JERSEY

2000-2001
Guidelines and
ApplicationBEST
PRACTICES**Deadline for Application to County Office:**
NOVEMBER 27, 2000

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Category	<u>Gifted and Talented</u>	(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	<u>Inter-district Problem Solving Convocations</u>	
Number of Schools with Practice	<u>5</u>	(If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)
Districts		

County	<u>Union</u>		
District (Proper Name)	<u>Rahway Public Schools</u>		
Address	<u>Kline Place</u>		
	Street/P. O. Box	<u>Rahway, NJ</u>	<u>07065</u>
	City		Zip Code
Telephone	<u>(732) 396-1020</u>	Fax	Email <u>wpetrino@rahway.net</u>
Chief School Administrator	<u>Dr. William Petrino, Ed.D</u>		
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)			
Address			
	Street/P. O. Box		
	City		Zip Code
Telephone		Fax	Email
Principal/Supervisor	<u>Lorraine Aklonis, Supv Humanities</u>		
Program Developer(s)	<u>Margaret Cilia, Justine Johnson, Susan Rubino</u>		
Application Prepared By	<u>Union County G/T Consortium</u>		
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	<u>[Signature]</u>		

FOR COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐ No County Superintendent's Signature _____

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEW JERSEY
BEST PRACTICES
2000-2001 APPLICATION

Application Requirements: Failure to comply with the procedures for submission of the application will result in the elimination of the application.

- RESPONSES** to the information and the statements below must be **ANONYMOUS** and **ACCURATE**. No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school(s) or community. Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in referring to the applicant in responding to the statements
- USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM** on pages 1, 2 (if applicable), and 4. Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.
- Application must be **keyboarded** on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, portrait format. Twelve-point or larger computer font or fourteen-pitch or larger typewritten font must be used. (This sentence is in twelve-point Times New Roman.)
- KEYBOARDED RESPONSES** to all the statements below must be **no more than a total of four pages**. Keyboard and number the statement followed by the response. Format your response for accuracy and clarity.
- The information on page 4 and the responses to statements must be copied on **one side of the page**. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be copied on **one side of the page**. Staple pages 1, 2 (if applicable), 4, and the keyboarded responses together, in that same order.
- The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.
- The original and seven copies of the application must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by **November 27, 2000**, with the Itemized List of District Applications form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
Type of School	Grade Levels	Practice Name <u>Inter-district</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary School	<u>3-5</u>	<u>Problem solving convocations</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middle School	<u>6-8</u>	Number of Schools with Practice <u>15</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School	<u> </u>	Number of Districts with Practice <u>5</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> High School	<u> </u>	Location <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban/City <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban With Urban Characteristics
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small City/Town <input type="checkbox"/> Rural

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Visual and Performing Arts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Learning Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/Evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gifted and Talented Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness
<input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual Education and Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Character Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Support/Guidance and Counseling Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/> World Languages
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Engagement	
	(family involvement and partnerships with business, community, school districts, and/or higher education)	

- Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.
- List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*,* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.
- Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.
- Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

*The 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.
6appbp.20

**New Jersey
Best Practices
2000 – 2001 Application**

INTER-DISTRICT PROBLEM SOLVING CONVOCATIONS

1. **Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.** Convocations, as a model, were first developed in New Jersey in the 1980's under the direction of Dr. Theodore Gourley, then Director of Gifted and Talented Education at the New Jersey Department of Education. One purpose of these convocations was to enable urban youth within a given district to work together with experts in various fields on a given topic. Teachers and or Coordinators of gifted and talented programs from five districts within our county have worked together over the past twelve years to adapt this convocation model and create our own **Inter-district Problem Solving Convocations** for our gifted and talented students in grades three through eight. Each year approximately 100 – 125 students from each of these districts meet together for a one or two day experience at each grade level. There are several overall objectives for these convocations: 1) to provide an opportunity for gifted and talented students from diverse districts to work on inter-district teams to solve particular tasks 2) to challenge and develop the higher level thinking abilities and communication skills of this population 3) to promote an understanding of particular content as it relates to specific convocations.

Our **Inter-district Problem Solving Convocations** are innovative in that we have synthesized the ideas and suggestions of the teachers in our group to create activities that have demonstrated success for our students over several years. In most classrooms, a few students are in a district's gifted and talented program. When working together at our convocations, these students are challenged by the higher level tasks and the students from other districts to work at even higher levels than usual. Having a full day event allows these students to work at tasks longer than usual, and at deeper levels. The students work intently and intensely to complete their problem solving tasks and many have formed inter-district friendships via e-mail which continue to add to the success of the activities.

Each grade level convocation focuses on problem solving, but the tasks and activities vary. Grades 3 (Brain Bowl) and Grade 4 (Mental Marathon) are competitive convocations. Students arrive at a central location and work mainly in a gym and one breakout room. They begin with icebreaker activities that help establish their inter-district team identities. In grade 3 they design license plates

and in grade 4 they create a logo that is drawn on their painter caps. Teams then proceed throughout the day through various problem-solving stations to earn points for their team. In grade 3, stations include tower building, estimation, brainstorming and a question/answer section. In grade 4, the stations include logic, research, tangrams and analogies. Totals are tallied at the end of the day and awards given to the highest teams.

In grade 5 and 6, the convocations focus on the theme of the environment. In grade 5, students are involved in mini-workshops for the first part of the day with experts in various environmental fields. These may vary year to year depending on availability, but have included presentations from the Raptor Trust, Elizabethtown Water, Exxon, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, as well as on the topics of deforestation and community planning. After the workshops, the students work on environmental tasks that enable them to synthesize the knowledge they have and apply it to real-life situations. Students are also expected to return to their districts with a plan for sharing what they have learned.

In grade 6, students extend their learning and add the dimension of a simulation to the experience. The Law and The Environment Convocation is usually held at a local college. Prior to convocation day, students see a film from the New Jersey Bar Foundation that teaches them the mock trial process and enables them to act as jurors. When the students arrive at the convocation, they begin with a keynote talk given by an environmental attorney followed by a short question/answer session. Some time is then spent discussing conflict resolution techniques that may be used later in the day when conflicts arise. Students are then divided into teams (two to a classroom) and proceed to assigned classrooms where they are given a case involving an environmental issue. They divide into various roles, plaintiff, defense, witnesses and plan and prepare their cases. At the appropriate time, cases are presented in each classroom, with the teacher acting as judge and the students taking turns presenting their case and then acting as jurors for the other case. Students re-convene as a large group to hear the final jury results for each of the two cases. Discussion, and student evaluations close the day.

In grade 7, students participate in various activities designed to help them learn about The Great Brain. Morning workshop stations include Drawing on The Right Side of the Brain, Medical Imaging of the Brain, What If? and Thinking Like Leonardo Da Vinci. Students also discover different learning styles and synthesize this information to create an original presentation, utilizing each of the various learning styles, demonstrating how to ride a bicycle. An extensive student handout is also distributed to the students for future learning connections.

In grade 8, students are involved in a two-day experience. This convocation (Cars of the Future), provides students with opportunities to learn about free enterprise, marketing, and various aspects of design as they explore what goes into the creation of new cars. The first day is spent gathering information from various experts and making preliminary plans for their team designs. Day two enables the students to complete their detailed plans for design and marketing, present them to each other, and have them "critiqued" by the experts.

2. **List the specific *Core Curriculum Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standards.**

All of our **Inter-district Problem Solving Convocations** address Standard 3 of the *Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards*: **All students will use critical thinking, decision making and problem-solving skills.** The previous descriptions of each convocation detail how problem-solving is an integral component of each event, enabling students to develop original ideas, recognize and define problems, create various solutions, analyze and evaluate data, etc. In addition to this standard, each convocation focuses on additional *Core Curriculum Standards* depending on the theme or topic. For example, grade 3 addresses math 4.4 (reasoning ability) and 4.5 (use of manipulative to enhance mathematical thinking) in the estimation station. Grade 4 addresses standard 4.7 (develop spatial sense and ability to use geometric properties to solve problems) in the tangrams station. Grades 5 and 6 address environmental concepts in standards 5.1 (identifying systems of interacting components) and 5.2 (develop problem solving, decision making and inquiry skills). In grades 6, 7, and 8 where presentations are made, standards 3.1(speaking), 3.2 (active listening)and 3.4 (critical analysis of material) are addressed.

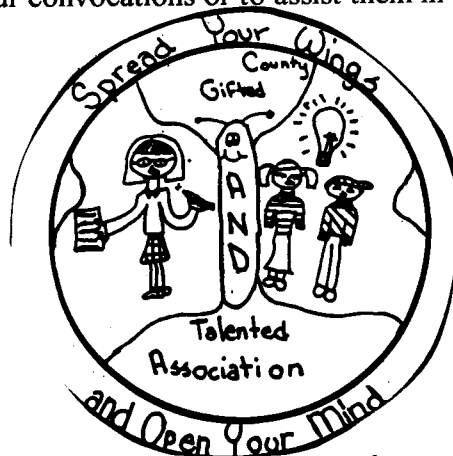
3. **Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.**

Students identified as gifted and talented have many needs, especially the need to work with others of similar ability for some portion of time. These students need to work at tasks that require higher levels of thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation), for longer periods of time, and often at a faster pace than in a regular classroom setting. These students also need opportunities to work on tasks that require problem finding, as well as, problem solving, make real-world connections and make use of interdisciplinary, advanced content, as stated by Barbara Swicord, founder and first president of the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children in an article titled “ Problem Based Learning for Gifted Education”. Most districts have some form of pullout program that enables these students to work together for some part of time each week. These convocations provide an opportunity for these students to work with a large number of students with similar abilities, communicating their ideas in positive ways so that they can complete the various problem-solving tasks, and develop a better understanding and respect for each others abilities. Also, some of the convocations involve the students in workshops with “experts” who indirectly provide career information to the students. A schedule of the

events/activities for each convocation has been developed and is distributed to the students. Each convocation concludes with the students completing a feedback or evaluation sheet. In addition to commenting on the various learning experiences, workshops, stations, etc., the students also comment on their problem-solving experiences and the strategies they used for problem solving in the various stations. The “home district” teachers use these evaluations for follow-up discussions with their students and with the other county teachers to evaluate the event.

4. **Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school or district.**

All of the convocations described in this practice can be easily replicated by other districts for use with their gifted population or, with modifications, with their school population. Each convocation has a program or outline/schedule of the day, materials for each of the stations in grades 3 and 4, outlines of tasks for grades 5-8, and evaluation forms for each convocation. Others wishing to replicate these convocations can attend the convocations and observe first-hand how they operate or meet with each convocation coordinator to discuss particulars for that event. Our convocations are scheduled for the following dates this year: Grade 3 – December 1, Grade 4-February 13, Grade 5 – March 20, Grade 6 – May 22, Grade 7 – January 12 and Grade 8 – Date in May to be determined. Also, these convocations are low-cost/no-cost events since we have done all of the planning ourselves. We do charge \$1.00 per student to cover the costs of materials (painter caps, ribbons, markers, etc.) or occasionally presentations such as the Raptor Trust. Some of the districts provide their own transportation, while others may pay to rent a bus. Most of our guest speakers volunteer their time to present. Several of our members presented a workshop entitled **Inter-District Problem Solving Convocations for Gifted Students** at this year’s NJEA convention in a how-to format with a handout to interested districts. This workshop could also be presented to interested teachers/districts who might wish to replicate our convocations or to assist them in creating their own.



(Logo designed by two fifth-grade students as part of a contest our county association sponsored last year. The county name has been covered as stipulated in the application directions).